CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. In a computer system having a display device including a display surface, a method of operation comprising:

reserving a first portion of the display surface for exclusive use by a first program; and

rendering contents in said reserved first portion of the display surface, by said first program, excluding all other programs from using said reserved first portion of display surface.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein said reserving comprises requesting a window manager to switch to a display mode having a smaller pixel configuration.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein said reserving further comprises aborting a responsive request by the window manager to a display device driver to configure a display hardware to said smaller pixel configuration.

4. The method of claim 2, wherein said reserving further comprises pre-alerting an exclusive-use display area manager of said display mode switch request to said window manager.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein

the method further comprises determining if a first event has occurred; and

said reserving is performed only if the first event is determined to have occurred.

6. The method of claim 5, wherein the method further comprises

determining if a second event has occurred; and

unreserving said first portion of the display surface for exclusive use by said first program if the second event is determined to have occurred.

7. The method of claim 6, wherein said unreserving comprises requesting a window manager to switch to a display mode having a larger pixel configuration.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein said unreserving further comprises aborting a responsive request by the window manager to a display device driver to configure a display hardware to said larger pixel configuration.

9. The method of claim 7, wherein said reserving further comprises pre-alerting an exclusive-use display area manager of said display mode switch request to said window manager.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein the method further comprises

monitoring for a request by an application to change a display mode to a full screen mode; and

notifying said first program to temporarily stop rendering contents in said reserved first portion of the display surface.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the method further comprises

monitoring for a request by an application to change a display mode from a full screen mode to a normal mode; and

notifying said first program to resume rendering contents in said reserved first portion of the display surface.

12. The method of claim 1, wherein the method further comprises

monitoring for a request by an application to change a display mode to a full screen mode; and

upon detecting such as request, intercepting all page flipping calls by said application, and forwarding each of said page flipping calls onward only after said first program has updated a back buffer.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the method further comprises interacting with said full screen mode requesting application to maintain said reserved first portion of the display surface

14. In a computer system having a display device including a display surface, a method of operation comprising:

pre-alerting an exclusive-use display area manager of a display mode switch request to a window manager;

submitting said display mode switch request to said window manager; and

aborting a responsive request by the window manager to a display device driver to configure a display hardware in accordance with said display mode switch request.

15. The method of claim 14, wherein said display mode switch request is a request to switch to a selected one of a smaller and a larger pixel configuration.

16. In a computer system having a display device including a display surface, a method of operation comprising:

determining if a first event has occurred;

operating the display device with the display surface having one or more exclusive use display areas whose contents are persistently visible if the first event is determined to have occurred;

determining if a second event has occurred; and

operating the display device with the display surface having no exclusive use display area whose contents are persistently visible if the second event is determined to have occurred.

17. The method of claim 16, wherein said operating of the display device with the display surface having one or more exclusive use display areas whose contents are persistently visible further comprises accommodating an application that operates in a full screen mode.

18. The method of claim 17, wherein said accommodating comprises temporarily suspending rendering contents into said exclusive use display areas.

19. The method of claim 17, wherein said accommodating comprises interacting with said application that operates in a full screen mode to at least partially maintain said exclusive use display areas.

20. In a computer system having a display device including a display surface, a method of operation comprising:

intercepting a page flipping call by an application that operates in a full screen mode;

updating locations of a back buffer unused by said application with contents to be persistently visible; and

forwarding said page flipping call onward after said updating.

21. An article of manufacture comprising:

a recordable medium having stored thereon a plurality of programming instructions to be executed by a processor, wherein when executed, perform the operations set forth in claim 1.

22. An article of manufacture comprising:

a recordable medium having stored thereon a plurality of programming instructions to be executed by a processor, wherein when executed, perform the operations set forth in claim 14.

23. An article of manufacture comprising:

a recordable medium having stored thereon a plurality of programming instructions to be executed by a processor, wherein when executed, perform the operations set forth in claim 16.

24. An article of manufacture comprising:

a recordable medium having stored thereon a plurality of programming instructions to be executed by a processor, wherein when executed, perform the operations set forth in claim 20.

25. An apparatus comprising:

a display device having a display surface;

a storage medium having stored therein a plurality of programming instructions designed to implement a display device driver to render displays on said display surface of said display device, and an exclusive use manager to cooperate with said display device driver to facilitate exclusive use of at least a first sub-portion of said display surface for rendering persistently visible contents; and

a processor coupled to the display device and the storage medium to execute the programming instructions.

26. The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the exclusive use manager is equipped to receive an alert of a display mode change request from a window manager to said display device driver, and in response, upon intercepting said display mode change request, aborting said display mode change request.

27. The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the exclusive use manager is equipped to monitor for a display mode change request to enter a full screen mode of operation from an application, and in response, notifying applications associated with said exclusive use display areas to temporarily suspend rendering contents into said exclusive use display areas.

28. The apparatus of claim 25, wherein the exclusive use manager is equipped to monitor for a display mode change request to enter a full screen mode of operation from an application, and interact with said application to at least partially maintain said exclusive use display areas.

29. The apparatus of claim 28, wherein the exclusive use manager is further equipped to intercept page flipping calls by said application, and facilitating rendering of contents into said exclusive use display areas by applications associated with the exclusive use display areas prior to forwarding the intercepted page flipping calls.

30. An operating system comprising:

a display device driver to render displays on a display surface of a display device; and

an exclusive use manager to cooperate with said display device driver to facilitate exclusive use of at least a first sub-portion of said display surface for rendering persistently visible contents.

31. The operating system of claim 30, wherein the exclusive use manager is equipped to receive an alert of a display mode change request from a window manager to said display device driver, and in response, upon intercepting said display mode change request, aborting said display mode change request.

32. The operating system of claim 30, wherein the exclusive use manager is equipped to monitor for a display mode change request to enter a full screen mode of operation from an application, and in response, notifying applications associated with said exclusive use display areas to temporarily suspend rendering contents into said exclusive use display areas.

33. The operating system of claim 30, wherein the exclusive use manager is equipped to monitor for a display mode change request to enter a full screen mode

of operation from an application, and interact with said application to at least partially maintain said exclusive use display areas.

34. The operating system of claim 30, wherein the exclusive use manager is further equipped to intercept page flipping calls by said application, and facilitating rendering of contents into said exclusive use display areas by applications associated with the exclusive use display areas prior to forwarding the intercepted page flipping calls.